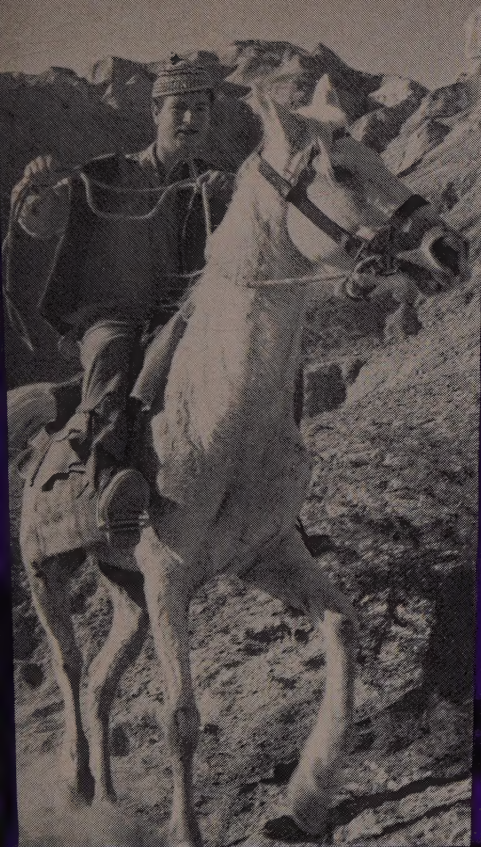


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*Youth* / the heritage of Jewish teens

# THE PROBLEMS **jewish** **teen-agers** FACE TODAY

By Emanuel S. Goldsmith



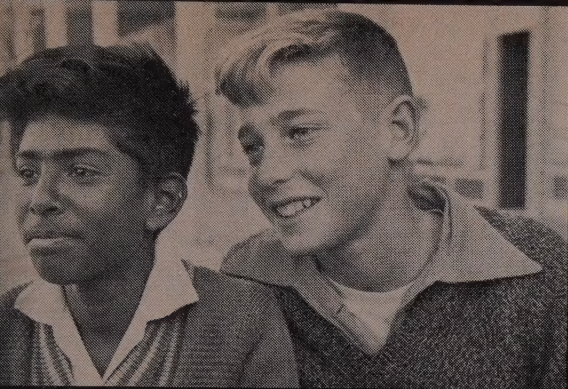
THE DECALOGUE / The Tablets of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) symbolize the giving of the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai (see Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5). This event is especially remembered at the holiday of Shavuoth.

In the normal process of growing up the Jewish teenager has a big advantage says a leading educator in a recent article on the U.S. teenager. His reasoning goes like this: Being a member of a minority with a distinct identity and with a tradition of which he can be proud and from which he can criticize the mores around him, the Jewish youth is not as lonely as other youth. He can begin to trust earlier, and when he begins to trust, he can begin to share.

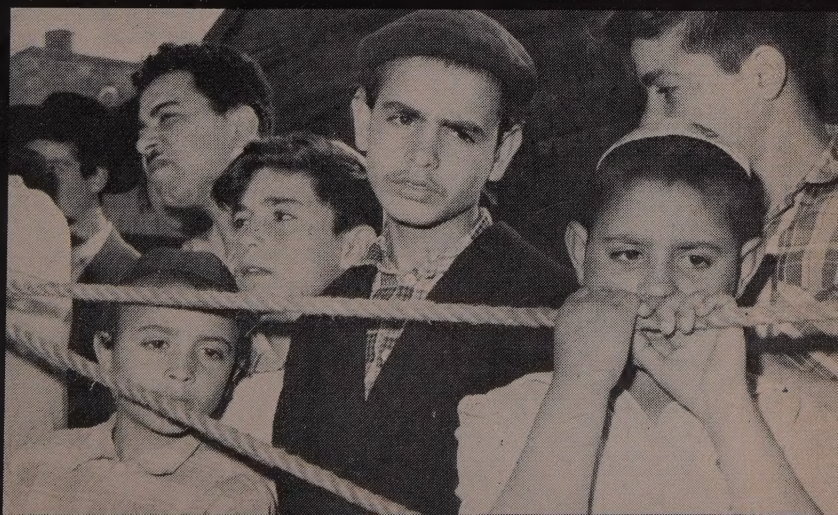
But this is only part of the story. While it is certainly true that Jewish group identification could be an invaluable source of help to the Jewish teenager in his efforts to adjust to the complex adult world of the American culture, it is no less true that many U.S. Jewish teenagers are unaware of the advantages of Jewish group life and are woefully ignorant of Jewish culture and religion in America today.

In terms of his emotional, intellectual and spiritual development, the American Jewish teenager faces several problems which his Protestant and Roman Catholic counterpart may find difficult to understand and appreciate. For every young person, adolescence is a difficult step in an individual's progress toward physical, mental, emotional and religious

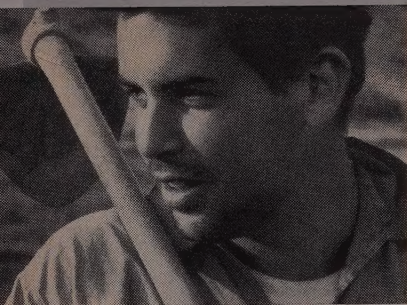




An immigrant from Bombay  
and his new friend,  
a U.S. volunteer overseas,  
a newlywed couple,  
the curious in Jerusalem  
—all are Jewish youth  
facing today's world.







# Youth

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At work on a kibbutz in Israel

ious maturity. It is even more so for the Jewish teenager because being a Jew means making a 4000-year-old history, culture and religion one's own, plus coming to grips with many of the complex problems which the Jewish people face in the world today.

The difficulties which Jewish adolescents in America face as a result of their Jewishness fall into three categories: (1) the minority problem; (2) anti-Semitism and (3) self-understanding. And the last of these three is the most difficult problem.

1. *The minority problem*: It is no fun being a member of a minority group unless you have great confidence in the purposes and goals of the minority and great faith in their eventual achievement. Many Jewish teenagers lack this kind of confidence and faith. They find themselves automatically part of a minority group without the spiritual armament to withstand either the verbal attacks of others or their own confusion and doubts about Jewish life.

Social scientists have pointed out that members of minority groups sometimes accept the negative views of the majority about themselves. Such members of a minority may even consider themselves "punished" because they are not part of the majority. This is often referred to as "self-hatred." And, on the part of Jewish self-hatred ranges all the way from "Jewish inferiority complex" (when a Jew believes his people are not as good as non-Jews) to conversion to another faith or even psychological disturbance (in very extreme cases) as ways of rid- ding oneself of one's Jewishness.

Jews constitute only about three per cent of the total U.S. population. They are a very small minority everywhere in America, except in a large metropolitan

center like New York City where they represent 30 percent of the population. By the time a Jewish child reaches the adolescent years, he is fully aware of his minority status. Christian religion and Christian holidays are very much a part of the American scene. And so, from his school and his playmates, from newspapers and television, the Jewish child learns that he is a member of a minority group.

2. *Anti-Semitism*: There is probably less open anti-Semitism in America today than ever before. Colleges and universities that previously rejected Jewish students on flimsy grounds now accept them, and even some of the larger industries, which once openly discriminated against Jews, now boast of Jewish employees. There is little anti-Semitic propaganda on the air, except from extreme rightist groups. The neighborhood gang no longer beats up the Jewish kid around the corner. As a matter of fact, now the Jewish kid is probably a bona fide member of the gang.

But anti-Semitism still exists, for people's hearts and minds do not change quickly. From the expression "Jewing down" still used in Southern states to the resort hotels where Jews always seem to be too late to find accommodations, anti-Semitism is still very much alive. What is perhaps even more important is the fact that anti-Semitism is still a part of many forms of the Christian religion. All one needs to do is to examine textbooks in many of our Sunday church schools.

Anti-Semitism is part of Western culture. Writers like Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Dickens and others have anti-Semitic elements in their writings. And world history is still taught in many schools as if the Jews and Judaism disappeared right after Christianity was born. Unless he has received a very good Jewish education (and that is rare), the Jewish adolescent may feel, along with his Christian schoolmates, that after the close of the Hebrew Bible, the Jews contributed little if anything of value to human culture and progress. (Even the term "old testament" is a slight to Judaism.)

Anti-Semitism is a problem for today's American Jewish teenager because he experiences it personally—"All Jews are too rich, or too poor, or communist, or capitalist, or saints, or devils." And he feels anti-Semitism personally when it makes him question the value of his belonging to the Jewish people—"Maybe there is something to what anti-Semites say, after all. Perhaps we Jews are too this or too that."

3. *Self-understanding* is the most difficult challenge facing the American Jewish teenager today. Jews have been a minority group in many places and for long periods of time. They have experienced anti-Semitism in one form or another for more than 2000 years. But never before in their long and glorious history have so many Jews known so little about themselves, their history, their faith, and their culture. American Jewish teenagers and their parents are for the most part shockingly ignorant of their rich heritage and tradition.



"Only three to four percent of American Jewish youth continue their Jewish education into the high school years," observes Dr. Max F. Baer, National Director of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization. "Jewish-illiterate youth become Jewish-illiterate adults who head our synagogues and temples, our Jewish centers, and our welfare funds. Knowing little about the Jewish past, they shape the destiny of the Jewish future."

No wonder then that Jewish teenagers are reported to be more dissatisfied with the religious aspects of their culture than are Roman Catholic and Protestant youth. A recent survey says that fewer of the Jewish youth attend services of worship and more of them describe themselves as agnostics. Faith in the ability of religious leaders to do something that would help promote peace in the world was expressed by 52 percent of the Roman Catholic and Protestant youth, but only by 15 percent of the Jewish young people.

In spite of the fact that the Jewish teenager's relation to formal Jewish religion is minimal, one educator says that "some of the deepest foundations upon which religion builds are genuinely present. There is more concern among the Jewish youth about standards of right and wrong, and how they can properly be judged. There is less of the superficial American optimism which assumes that everything is going to turn out happily. I believe there is more openness to creative prophetic innovation."

The adult Jewish community in America is currently going through an agonizing reappraisal of its attitude to the Jewish religious education of the young. While the percentage of Jewish teenagers who go on to college is much greater than that of the population at large, most American Jewish teenagers receive no formal Jewish religious and cultural instruction during the adolescent years. Such education is usually carried on informally through such instruments as the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization and the synagogue and Zionist youth groups.

The answer to the problem of the Jewish teenager's self-knowledge and self-acceptance would seem to lie in the creation of a new type of Jewish religious school system which teenagers could attend two or three times a week in addition to their regular schooling. At present only their younger brothers and sisters usually attend such schools.

In describing such a projected school system, Rabbi Jack J. Cohen, a leading Jewish educator, writes: "The courses themselves must be broad in spirit as the expanding world of adolescence demands. The adolescent will be dissatisfied with an introverted presentation of Jewish history; he will want to investigate the Jewish past against the backdrop of the world history that he is studying in his general education. He will find the analysis of Jewish religion unnecessarily confining unless its ideals and practices are compared and contrasted with those of the other great religions of the world. The adolescent

Students in Jerusalem bid good-bye to one of their teachers at the end of a school day.

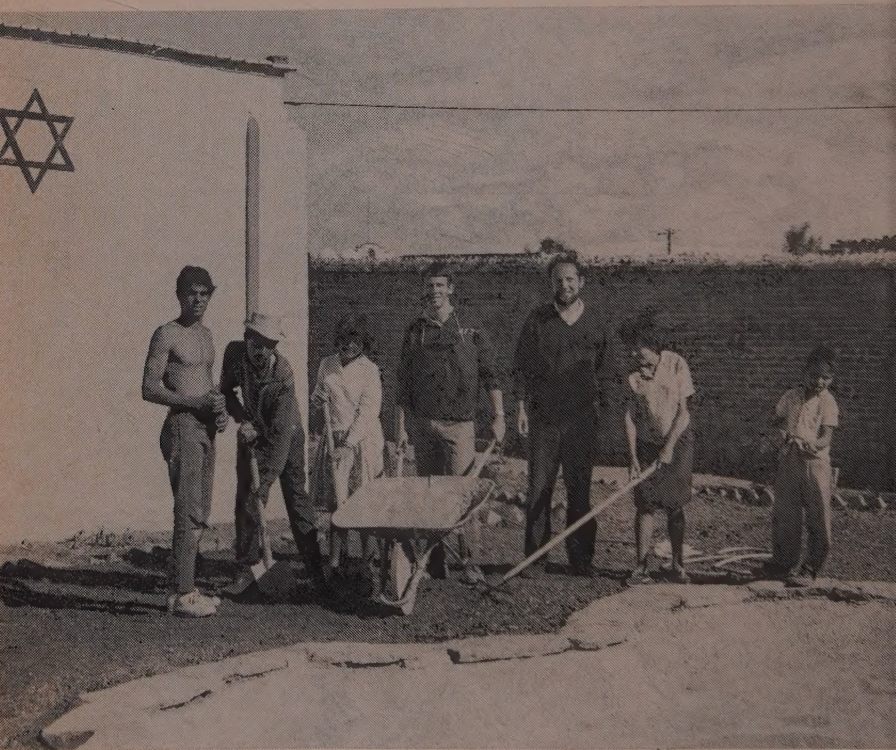


so wants his religious education to bear on his problems of dating, his religious doubts, his disagreements with his parents' outlook and his gropings after a vocation. When he can see that the Jewish school is eager to help him secure answers to these questions, he will respond more positively to the appeal to continue his Jewish education."

Only a revitalized Jewish education can stem the tide of apathy and ignorance among the American Jewish community today. Only such an education can strengthen the American Jewish teenager's allegiance to the five loyalties which have distinguished the Jews since the very beginnings of their history: loyalty to the historic and contemporary Jewish people, to the Jewish heritage, to humanity, to the historic birthplace and spiritual center of the Jewish people (the Land of Israel), and to the God of all mankind.

**Abbi Emanuel S. Goldsmith** recently became Executive Vice President of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation in New York. He was formerly Associate Director of Program and Publications of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization in Washington, D.C.





Calling themselves a Mitzvah Corps (or Corps of Good Deeds), 18 Jewish youth from the U.S. volunteered a month of last summer's vacation to build a new community center in Venta Prieta, a hamlet 60 miles north of Mexico City. Living in the village are 120 "Mexican Jews" who are thought to be the only parents in Mexico who leave their fields idle on Saturday. The nine girls and nine boys, 15 to 18 years old, who worked under the leadership of a Spanish-speaking French-born, American rabbi, all belong to the National Federation of Temple Youth, a junior affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Reform group.





Carrying out their own "war on poverty" project, members of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization collected books which were distributed to local needy elementary school libraries, classrooms, and children. The project was praised in a letter from Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey.



The "Jericho March" was organized last spring in an effort to bring down "the walls of hate and prejudice" which separate Soviet Jewry from Jews around the world. Some 1000 college and high school students, rabbis, cantors, and teachers marched around the Soviet Mission to the U.N. in New York. They carried seven Torah scrolls and seven shofars, which were blasted periodically as a reminder of the story in Joshua 6. They sang Psalm 20 and carried many placards.



# HOW DID **prejudice** GET TO BE THE WAY IT IS?

By Solomon S. Bernards

What is prejudice and what makes people prejudiced? Before we can give an adequate answer to this double-barrelled question, we must make an important distinction. Basically there are two types of prejudice. The first type is relatively harmless, and hence is not the subject of this article. The other kind not only does incalculable damage to the object of the prejudice, but to its holder, as well as to the entire community.

The first, and relatively harmless, kind of prejudice is linked to the natural human tendency to make generalizations "off the top of one's head," even if we don't know what we're talking about. It may help impress our date if, just to make conversation and appear well-informed, we may make broad statements about people and events, even if our information is fragmentary or mistaken, or worst of all, false or non-existent! Assuming that somebody calls our bluff, and challenges us, if we are willing to be corrected when the facts are brought to our attention, then our prejudice remains a hasty judgment which has been corrected in the light of reason, common sense and fair play.

The second, and destructive, kind of prejudice occurs when we connect our hasty, half-baked judgments with our



STAR OF DAVID ENCIRCLED / The six-pointed star or "shield of David" has become a symbol of the Jewish religion. During World War II the Nazis required all Jewish persons wear a yellow armband on which was the Star of David encircled.





A Nazi swastika armband

Hatred of Jews is still evident today as this boy reads the remains of the words "Juden Biss" (Jews bit out) written in red paint over a poster in Germany.



emotions, our feelings. In other words, when we mix the ill-founded generalization and notion with anger, resentment, frustration, envy, bitterness, revenge, and the like—ignoring the facts and the feelings of others—then we have become infected with prejudice. We will not permit any information to modify or change our position.

Somehow, when this hasty judgment becomes interlocked with feeling, all reasonableness is drained out; the eyes cannot see reality, the ears become deaf to the sound of compassion, charity and trust. It is as if to say, "don't confuse me with the facts."

The gradations of hostility and negativeness associated with prejudicial judgments run along a scale—from deeply buried feelings which never come out, to outright expressions of prejudice, open acts of hostility (this is called discrimination), physical acts of violence on the objects of prejudice, and ultimately to . . . the gas chambers of Hitler's Europe, when six million Jews were done to death.

What makes people harbor these destructive impulses? A simple answer is impossible. Prejudice goes back to the earliest days of the human family; hence it is a very complex phenomenon. Among the most important causes of prejudice are: (1) differences over religious belief; (2) minority groups which appear to threaten the majority; (3) crumbling political, social and economic structures; (4) the need of a scapegoat, on the part of groups and individuals; (5) economic, political and social rivalry and competition; (6) disenfranchised groups seeking a return to the "old order"; (7) insecure and confused people in need of feeling "superior" to others.

What is so vicious about prejudice is that once it has become established, accepted, and "fashionable," it feeds on itself. Rooting it out thus becomes an extremely difficult task.

Why do some people have prejudice against the Jewish people? The phenomenon of anti-Jewish prejudice, or anti-Semitism, has been the subject of most intensive study in the last several decades. Interestingly, all of the seven factors listed above, and numerous others, have interacted to distort the minds and hearts of non-Jews about their Jewish neighbors and compatriots. The Jewish experience of prejudice has been unique—it predates the prejudice against the colored people by many centuries.

In a case study of prejudice and discrimination, Professor Milton Yinger has pointed out that "anti-Semitism is in many ways the 'classic' prejudice. Through the course of the centuries it has illustrated all of the intricately related forces at work. . . . In almost every major economic or political conflict in the last several centuries, one of the opposing forces, or both, has employed anti-Semitism as a weapon. . . . Hasty observers—including many Americans—are likely to say 'there must be something to it,' if a prejudice has existed so long and expressed itself in so many different settings. They con-



pletely misunderstand the self-perpetuating nature of deep-seated prejudice, once it has become thoroughly established."

What are some of the basic factors out of which anti-Semitic prejudice grows and how do these factors relate to major misconceptions about Jews?

1. *The persistent continuity of the Jewish people as a distinct and separate group.* The insistence of the Jewish people on maintaining its group identity, its distinctive commitment to the One God of Israel, its refusal to compromise its abhorrence of pagan ritual and mores, its fidelity to the way of the Torah and the pattern of living decreed by the Torah and its interpreters (the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Rabbis, and the teachers of each generation)—all this no doubt generated resentment and hostility among their neighbors from earliest times and on. On the other hand, many pagans were attracted to the Jewish faith and way, and adopted Judaism.

Here then was an early source of antipathy—why can't Jews be like the rest of us? Why do they refuse to eat the same foods with us? Why can't they join us at our civil ceremonies (which included pagan libations)? Why do they reject the advances of our sons and daughters to marry their children?

These questions persist to this day, albeit in slightly modified form. Christian teenagers discover that contacts with their Jewish friends suddenly weaken, often disappear. What's wrong? The fact that Jews are not engaged in active missionary efforts to gain converts, raises another question: Why are Jews so snobbish, so exclusivist?

Jewishly-conscious Jews want their homes, and the homes of their children, to reflect the age-old ideals and practices of Judaism. A home with divided religious loyalties will weaken, if not destroy, its Jewish commitment. Furthermore, there are absolutely no exclusions practiced against anyone desiring to embrace Judaism and become part of the Jewish people—Jewish experience and tradition simply insists that the initiative and conviction must come, not from outside persuasion, but from inner resolve and decision, which is then responded to most sympathetically by Rabbinic bodies.

2. *The rejection by Jews of the messianic claim and the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth.* The conflict between Judaism and Christianity, took on such virulence, such violent hatred, that beginning in the Gospels, as Professor Frederick Grant has observed, "anti-Jewish dogma was deeply fixed in Christian thought and devotion . . . dreadful utterances, which ought to find no place in any sacred book, stand out conspicuously in the New Testament." For having rejected—as the Jews thought and believe to this day, in utter fidelity to the teachings of the Torah—Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, Christian teachers made Jews the personification of the devil, doomed to eternal perdition and suffering. No charge levelled against



"Stoning Jews in Lent, a custom"; woodcut 1832 (The Bettman Archive)

Jews by the Popes, saints, Councils, theologians and scholars of the Church in the first 19 centuries of Christendom, was too outrageous not to be believed. Thus were the wells of salvation poisoned through the host of cruel stereotypes of the Jew and of Judaism—that Judaism was a sterile, rigidly ritualistic, degenerated faith; that Jews, as Christ-killers, carried the stain of betrayal on their brows; that the Jews had lost their prerogatives in the new dispensation and were no longer the true Israel; etc. etc.

Many, if not most, of these vindictive prejudices about Jews have been repudiated by Christians of good will. But the impact of so many centuries of Gospel instruction and preachment will go on for a long time, unless direct efforts are made to correct distortions, derogations and misinterpretations which have been hallowed by tradition.

3. *Jews had no legal rights or powers in any of the European countries until the end of the 18th century. Their separation and differentiation from the rest of the community was complete.* By action of the Christian authorities, Jews were deprived of their citizenship from the Fifth Century on, and thus lived in areas only at the pleasure of the rulers. They were driven into the despised occupations—as moneylenders, customs and revenue collectors, and pawnbrokers. The



could own no land, and were kept out of the guilds. When necessary, and this happened quite often in the Middle Ages, they were the convenient scapegoat for all of the tensions, maladjustments and frustrations of the community.

For many centuries, Jews were expelled from England and France. During the four Crusades, hundreds of Jewish communities were burned to the ground. After a thousand years in Spain, they were given the choice of conversion to Christianity or expulsion. Their life in Poland and Czarist Russia was beset with terror and fear of pogroms instigated by the Czar in concert with Church authorities.

Bringing the subject into modern times, it would be possible to accuse Jews of being, on the one hand, the international bankers and capitalists (by Father Coughlin) and on the other hand, the international communists (by Hitler). A whole gallery of jokes, stories and stereotypes about Jews transmitted anti-Semitic attitudes from one generation to another. English literature, from Chaucer through Shakespeare through Dickens, reinforced these attitudes.

*What can right-minded youth do to combat anti-Semitism?*

- Anti-Semitism will be reduced when the causes which brought it into being are reduced. It is therefore the responsibility of young people to be engaged in self-appraisal as to prejudices about Jews which have become part of one's pattern of thought, and consciously to examine these prejudices in the light of reason, religious commitment, and morality.

- No less important is it to move the organizational wheels of the groups to which one belongs, to combat stereotyping among the membership, and to open up wider opportunities for all within the wider community.

- There must develop a new dimension of understanding of the nature of Jewish identity, of the complex reasons for the will to continuity and survival on the part of the Jewish community. This involves reading, study and discussion with Jewish friends and community leaders.

- New lines of communication should be set up between Christian and Jewish youth, to explore problems of common interest, and to work in areas of common concern. An examination of the commitments and beliefs which Jews and Christians hold in common, and those which differentiate them, should be discussed.

- Finally, a study of the nature and the effects of prejudice itself, and a disciplined approach to unlearn some of the preposterous notions and distortions which we have inherited from our environment, would bring us much nearer to the integrated and wholesome society toward which we all strive.

Abbi Solomon S. Bernards is Director of the Department of Interreligious Cooperation, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and has written numerous articles, pamphlets and books interpreting Judaism to the non-Jew.

## FOR FURTHER READING

- American Jews: Their Story*, O. Handlin. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York. 35c.
- Ancient Judaism and the New Testament*, Frederick C. Grant. The Macmillan Co. New York. \$3.95.
- Anti-Semitism: A Case Study in Prejudice and Discrimination*, J. Milton Yinger. Freedom Books (Anti-Defamation League). New York. \$1.25.
- Basic Judaism*, Milton Steinberg. Harcourt, Brace, and World. New York, 1947. \$2.50.
- A Bibliography on Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York. \$1.00.
- Eternal Faith, Eternal People*, Leo Trepp. Prentice Hall. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1962. \$9.65.
- The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion*; 3rd edition; 2 volumes. Harper and Row. \$27.50.
- Judaism and Modern Man*, Will Herberg. Jewish Publication Society. Philadelphia. \$1.55.
- The Living Heritage of the High Holy Days*, S. S. Bernards, editor. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York, 1962. 25c.
- The Living Heritage of Hanukkah*, D. Greenberg and S. S. Bernards, editors. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York, 1964. 50c.
- The Living Heritage of Passover*, with an abridged Passover Haggadah in English. S. S. Bernards, editor. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York, 1962. 50c.
- The Nature of Prejudice*, by Gordon W. Allport. Doubleday Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., N. Y., 1959. \$1.45.
- The Saving Remnant: An Account of Jewish Survival*, H. Agar. Compass. New York. \$1.45.
- Your Neighbor Celebrates*, A. Gilbert and O. Tarcov. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York, 1963. \$2.50. Pamphlet Version 35c.
- Your Neighbor Worships*. A. Gilbert. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. New York. 25c.
- The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, A. Hertzberg, editor. Meridian. Cleveland. \$2.25.



# The Holy Days of Judaism



**THE SABBATH**—The Sabbath is “the first” among the Jewish holy days. Every week it celebrates God’s creation of the world, with equal stress it commemorates the Exodus from Egypt, and the principle of a day of rest from physical labor for man and beast. It is a day of family joy, hospitality, spiritual delight, study, and love of neighbor. The messianic kingdom is described as “the day which is wholly Sabbath.” All the other days of the week are preparation for it. The Rabbis suggest that it is equal in importance to all the other commandments of the Torah, since it embodies all of Judaism’s basic teachings.

**ROSH HASHANAH** (Roshe Ha sha’na’h), “the beginning of the year.”—The Jewish New Year. Occurs in the fall (Au-



gust-September), and marks the beginning of the Jewish religious calendar. The Jewish year 5726 (in the traditional chronology, from the time of the beginning of the world) is observed in 1965-1966. Rosh Hashanah begins the ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal which culminates in Yom Kippur. Solemn, serious, but not sorrowful, it is dedicated to self-searching, to the recognition of God's transcendent power over man's destiny coupled with regret over past wrong-doing, and resolution to lead a better life in the future. The blowing of the Shofar (ram's horn) is its most distinctive ritual.

**YOM KIPPUR** (Yome Kippur)—The Day of Atonement. The ten-day period, the last and final, and most holy day of the "ten days of repentance." Marked by complete abstention from food for 24 hours, and a round of five services, the waking day is spent almost totally in confession of sin, prayers for forgiveness, and the search for reconciliation with one's fellow man.

**SUKKOTH** (soo'koath)—The Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles.—Commemorates the forty-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert, on the way to the Promised Land. Also observes the culmination of the fall harvest; an eight-day celebration of gratitude to God for the bounty of the earth. Affirms man's continued dependence on God for the material blessings of life. Served as the inspiration for the American observance of Thanksgiving Day. The palm branch and the citron, and the Sukkah (temporary living quarters during the holidays) are the two vivid symbols of this festival.

**SIMHATH TORAH** (Simchath To'rah)—The Rejoicing in the Torah.—Celebrates the conclusion of the reading



the five books of Moses in the annual public reading cycle in the synagogue, and its beginning anew. Affirms that the study of God's word and teaching is an unending process. Simhath Torah is the ninth and concluding day of the Sukkoth Festival.

### HANUKKAH (chah'noo'kah)

—Feast of Dedication, or Feast of Lights.—The eight-day festival, occurring in December, which celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem to the service of God, following the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian king Antiochus, who sought to suppress, and obliterate Jewish beliefs and practices. Symbolizes the miraculous in Jewish survival and continuity, and unflagging dedication to the prophetic thought, "not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord God of Hosts."

### TU BI'SHVAT (too bi'sh'vat)

—The Fifteenth of Sh'vat, or Arbor Day.—A minor holiday expressing gratitude for the renewal of tree-life in the land of Israel, symbolized by the planting of thousands of new saplings, especially in the denuded forest and mountain areas of the State of Israel.

### PURIM (poo'reem)—The

Feast of Lots, or The Feast of Esther. Marks the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia from the plot of Haman, King Ahasuerus' vizier, to exterminate them, through the intervention of Queen Esther. Related in the biblical Book of Esther.

### PASSOVER (peh'sach)—The

Festival of Passover.—The greatest of the "pilgrimage" festivals—commemorating the Exodus, after hundreds of years of oppression at the hands of the Egyptian Pharaohs. On the first two nights of the eight-day Passover festival, families sit down to the ceremonial



family meal, the "Seder," to recall the Egyptian bondage, and its meaning for all generations to come, as described in the Haggadah. An annual re-living of the slavery experience, and its meaning to every generation; a symbol for all time to come that God identifies Himself with the oppressed, the tyrannized, the orphaned, the widowed, and the stranger, and is the champion of all who seek freedom and integrity of spirit. Unleavened bread, "Matzah," is eaten during this eight-day period.

#### SHEVUOTH (sh'voo'oath)—

The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost.—After seven weeks of wandering in the desert, following their liberation from bondage, the children of Israel came to Mount Sinai, where through Moses, the greatest of all Hebrew prophets, God established His covenant with the people of Israel, and revealed the Decalogue, the basis of the Torah. A festival of major significance.



#### TISHA BAV (tish'ah b'ahv)

—The Ninth Day of Av.—A fast day on which is mourned the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, in the year 586 before the Christian era (at the hands of the Babylonians), and in the year 70 (by the Romans). The tragedy and significance of Jewish suffering through the ages forms the backdrop for the public recitation of the biblical Book of Lamentations, and the dirges and threnodies composed in later generations. The "exile of the Divine Presence," God's "hiddenness" from the world in permitting incredible suffering to continue, is also lamented.

—RABBI SOLOMON S. BERNARDS



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN modern judaism

By David Greenberg



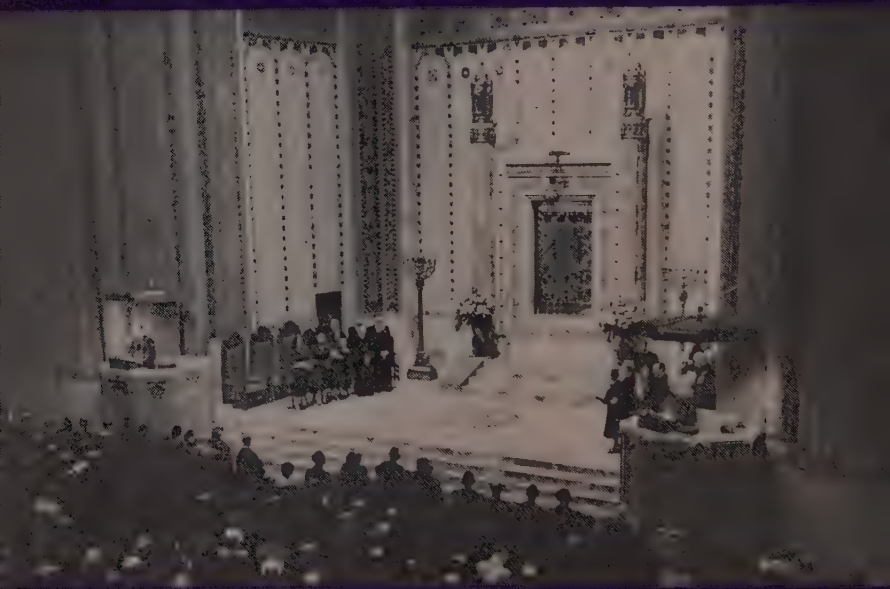
TRAH / The Torah scrolls, containing the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), are sacred in the Jewish religion. "Torah" means instruction and signifies the ethical way of life.

What do you think of when you hear the word "Jew"? Do you think of your neighbor and classmate or do you think of a priest or a prophet out of the Bible? Do you think of U.N. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg and Pitcher Sandy Koufax or do you conjure up a diabolic image out of the realm of myth and magic from the folklore of medieval Europe? Do you picture the people of Jesus or the slayers of Jesus, the international banker or international communist, a Shylock and Fagin or an Einstein and Anne Frank? Whichever romantic or demonic picture you choose, it will stand in the way of a true understanding and authentic relationship with your Jewish neighbor because it prevents you from knowing him as a fellow human being.

It is not merely a matter of separating fact from fancy and truth from myth or vicious falsehood. It is also a matter of distinguishing history from contemporary reality. While the present grows out of the past, it is not identical with it. What Judaism has become today is as important as how it began in the past. To understand the Jew of today in relationship to his cultural and spiritual tradition, one must understand that Judaism has not stood still since Sinai. It is a live and growing tradition, "a tree of life to those that grasp it, whose upholders are happy, whose ways are ways of pleasantness, whose paths are paths of peace."

Judaism is not a dead religion. The Jews are not a fossil people. Things are happening in Judaism today. It is a dynamic, evolving

A service of worship in Temple Emanu-el in New York City



tradition, alive and on the march, timeless as the Ten Commandments, relevant as tomorrow's paper. Isaiah's vision of one world inspires the current struggle for international peace. The symbolism and poetry of Passover proclaims the redemption from Egyptian bondage but the divine imperative comes thundering through time and space to the Jew today confronted by the civil rights issue, "Let my people go!"

Some Christian theologians believed that the Jews had fulfilled their mission when they gave birth to Christianity. According to this idea, like the salmon that has laid its eggs, the Jews should have drifted downstream to die. Perversely, perhaps in fulfillment of some mystic curse, the Jews are destined by some to continue to trudge through history bearing their scrolls, hawking old clothes and suffering martyrdom.

Jews have never acquiesced to this interpretation of their destiny. God's covenant with Abraham cannot be broken. God's word stands forever. Jesus and Mohammed have spread God's word to the ends of the earth but Jews still have a role to play in God's plan for mankind.



**God's covenant is eternal.** It is this faith that has enabled the Jews rise phoenix-like from the ashes of a hundred holocausts. Despite the destruction of a third of the Jewish people in Hitler's Europe and despite government hostility behind the Iron Curtain, Judaism flourishes in the Americas, in the gallant new state of Israel, and in historic communities throughout the world. The Jew proclaims with the psalmist, "I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord."

**What is a Jew?** Are the Jews a nation, race or religion? Jews and non-Jews disagree according to their theological slant and political motive. Casual observations lead to paradoxical conclusions. Are they a race? Anthropologists answer no. Anti-Semites answer yes. Are they a nation? In Israel there is a political state the majority of whose citizens are Jews. Elsewhere Jews give their exclusive political allegiance to the land in which they live. Are they a religion? Yes, but they are something more, for we speak of Hebrew language, Hebrew law, Jewish music, Jewish cooking, Jewish humor. Whoever heard of Baptist language, or Episcopalian cooking? For the answer to these questions we must turn to history, to an age before the modern concepts of state and religion were developed, for the Jewish people is a survival from that age and the product of unique historical circumstances.

The ancient history of the Hebrews is more familiar to the average American Christian than that of the country from which his immigrant ancestors came. In a significant sense, he is spiritually descended from Abraham, too. The Hebrews were originally an extended family, a kinship group consisting of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and those who married into the group or were adopted by them.

**Not a race, but a covenanted people.** When the Jews fled Egyptian bondage they were accompanied by a vast "mixed multitude" who shared their fervor for freedom and went with them into the desert for their rendezvous with God. It is clear already from the biblical narrative that we are dealing not with a restricted biological group or race but with a covenanted corporate entity, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" that stands at Sinai and proclaims, "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do." When they enter the promised land and establish a political state, they become a nation. It is important, however, to remember that in Israel religion was not apart from, but a part of, life, indeed co-extensive with it. Nation and religion are not distinct categories. Every aspect of national existence is consecrated to God.

In the Book of Ruth we read of the Moabite girl who vowed "thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God." She is not only judged worthy to join the household of Israel; she is regarded as the ancestress of King David and the messianic line. Subsequent rabbinic tradition regards every convert as descended from Abraham and describes a righteous convert as superior to a high priest who sins. They were not bound by a foolish pride of race.



Shortly after the war, a refugee ship arrives in Haifa, Israel.

In the course of their migrations, Jews have become racially mixed such a degree that it is apparent not only to anthropologists but even to the casual observer. Witness the ingathering of Jews from the ends of the earth in modern Israel: tall and blonde, short and dark, they have flowed into the promised land united by common faith, common memories and a common dream of freedom.

**After the Bible times, what?** The post-biblical period of Jewish history deserves to be better known, for it testifies to the power of the human spirit to prevail in spite of rack and stake and crematory. It is a tragic, heroic chronicle of martyrdom and faith. It is also a unique instance of continuous cultural and spiritual creativity on the part of a minority group separated from its ancestral soil.

Great Christian scholars have described the spiritual achievement of the rabbis in the early Christian era who preserved Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70. National independence had ended when the Romans first came upon the scene almost a century before. Already a great part of the people were



persed throughout the Mediterranean area. It was the rabbis who forged the Torah tradition and fashioned a pattern for survival without a temple in the lands of dispersion.

Jewish history from this time forward is the story of migration from land to land, from Israel to Babylonia, from Babylonia to Spain, from Spain to the Rhineland, from Western Europe to Eastern Europe, and from there to America and to Israel once more.

**Ghetto life.** Within the ghettos Jews maintained a system of universal public education for males, preserved their language, observed their laws, maintained their way of life and faith. Medieval law herded them into crowded ghettos, forced them to wear yellow badges, prohibited them from owning land or entering the trade guilds, stunted their growth and warped their bodies. But it could not quench their inner light or destroy their moral character. The Jews survived but they did more than survive, they continued to study, pray, and do good works. Without a state, they kept their way of life. They remained a people.

With the French Revolution the ghetto walls began to crumble. The Rights of Man were finally extended to the Jews. The European Renaissance came in the 16th century; for the Jews the Middle Ages ended in the 19th century. All present-day movements in Judaism can be regarded as variant responses to the intellectual and social problems generated by the breaking down of the ghetto walls. The Jews who flooded into the United States between 1890 and 1920 (when immigration was restricted) not only crossed thousands of miles of ocean, they leaped through hundreds of years of time. Jewish religious life is still recovering from that trauma and adjusting to the new situation. A tiny handful of Jews of Spanish descent came to America 300 years ago; a larger group came from Germany after the collapse of the liberal revolution of 1848; most came as refugees from Russian oppression around 1900.

The traditional educational system broke down as Jews eagerly enrolled in public schools. Sabbath and dietary restrictions proved an obstacle to employment and to speedy integration. Scientific thought and historical scholarship challenged the authority of traditional law. A new generation demanded translations of liturgy and liturgical reform consistent with modern thought.

**Orthodox, Reform, Conservative.** There are approximately five million American Jews, half of them clustered around New York and the remainder scattered across the country primarily in urban areas. Roughly, a third are Orthodox, a third, Conservative, a third, Reform. They are all Jews and regard each other as Jews. A marriage between a Conservative Jew and Reform Jew is not regarded as an intermarriage. They are divided primarily with regard to their attitude toward the guiding character of Jewish law. Orthodox Jews regard the law as Divine, absolute, eternal, immutable. All subsequent rabbinic interpreta-



The blowing of the shofar (ram's horn) during one of the high holy days

tions of Scripture are invested with the same sanctity as the Law of Moses. All precedents are binding. There are limited possibilities of change through the classic textual interpretation.

In practice, Orthodox Jews are expected to pray three times a day exclusively in Hebrew, wrapped in prayer shawls, heads covered. Women pray in a separate balcony. They abstain from the 39 categories of work prohibited on the Sabbath and the innumerable sub-categories. They eat Kosher food. Non-kosher food includes animals that do not chew the cud or have a cloven hoof, fish without scales, mixed milk and meat products, and all meats not slaughtered and inspected under rabbinic supervision, and salted and soaked before eating. While not all Orthodox Jews observe all the laws, they are committed to them in principle and regard themselves as transgressors when they violate them.

The major orthodox seminary is the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York which is a part of Yeshiva University. There is also a Union of Orthodox Congregations and there are two major rabbinical bodies. Their schools maintain intensive traditional scholarly standards.

Paradoxically the Reform Movement is the oldest organized movement on American soil and was the first to establish a rabbinical school, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, which now has branches in New York, Los Angeles and Jerusalem. Reform Judaism was established largely by German Jewish immigrants. Jews from all backgrounds belong to it today. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) introduced prayer in the vernacular, heads uncovered, confirmation and complete religious equality for boys and girls, and published the first religious school texts in English.

They established on scholarly grounds that Jewish religious law was the product of a continuous evolution and defended their right to modify it.



necessary reforms for their time. Tradition is guiding but not binding. Rationalism is de-emphasized and morality and ethics are stressed.

Conservative Judaism was the response to the reform movement on the part of East European Jews who were anchored to the tradition and yet felt the need to cope with the demands for renewal and change. Its stronghold is the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, one of the foremost institutes of Jewish learning in the world. Sociologically, it is closer in time to the East European tradition although its ideological background is drawn from German Jewish scholars and thinkers. The movement strives to reinterpret Jewish Law in accordance with traditional canons of exegesis more liberally than the orthodox. While they have not produced a significant body of authoritative interpretations, they have in fact achieved a style of Jewish practice which retains traditional warmth and yet meets the challenge of the American scene. The Conservative movement includes: The Rabbinical Assembly of America, representing some 800 Rabbis, and the United Synagogue of America, which ministers to congregations, religious schools, men and women's groups, and has an intensive youth program.

**Your typical Jewish classmate** today is the child of American-born parents. He has attended religious school three days a week and can sing the Hebrew responses in the prayerbook and perhaps read simple narrative portions of the Bible in Hebrew. Like you he is going through a stage where he begins to challenge what he has been taught. He is on the road to a mature faith. Social action and philanthropy are the contemporary expression of the prophet's call for justice and mercy. The energies traditionally devoted to study of Scripture are now directed to secular studies with the same drive toward excellence.

When he sits at the Seder of Passover dinner he reads, "Slaves were brought to Pharaoh in Egypt," and at that moment his every day existence as a high school student in the U.S.A. is touched by an awareness of his participation in an epic of the spirit whose last chapter will not be written till the end of days. He walks with Abraham on his lonely vigil, with Jacob he wrestles the angel in the dark night and emerges, Israel, champion of God. He stands with Moses at the fiery mount, with Elijah he denounces injustice at the throne of kings. He suffers the inquisitor's stake, the Crusader's sword, and with the victims of Hitler he walks to the gas chambers chanting "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, even though he tarry, I believe."

He is not a prophet but he is not permitted to forget he is in the tradition. He would join with all men in working for the day promised by the prophet, "When they will not hurt nor destroy on all God's holy mountain." He is bound by an ancient covenant and assured by an ancient promise. He will be there at the end. He will not despair. He will keep faith with faith.

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# israel

By Nancy E. Forsberg



MENORAH / This seven-branched candelabrum has been a holy symbol of Judaism since the time of Moses. It appears on the Israeli state seal. An eight-branched menorah is used in the celebration of Hanukkah.

"Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books." These are the opening words of the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel which May 14, 1948, marked the emergence of Israel as a state after an interlude of nearly two thousand years!

These words also provide the springboard to an understanding of modern Israel, for the importance of the land has always been an essential and integral factor in the history of the Jewish people. In the Book of Genesis the indissoluble connection between God, Abraham, his seed and the land was the basis of a covenant relationship, for Jewish tradition God, the Land and the People are one. The Land inspired the People and the People renewed the Land, according to the Jewish faith.

An understanding of history, therefore, is necessary in order to understand the basic philosophy of the Jewish state for Israel is not just a state for poor Jews as it has been described by some, but for the Jews it is "the Promised Land" which they have been linked spiritually and culturally for more than three millennia.

As far as world territories go, this ancient land was small and lacking in resources, yet its geographic significance as a land bridge between the Orient and the Occident has given it a singularly unhappy role in the history of world empires and conquerors.

Before 1948, Palestine had been

High school students from Jerusalem returned through the Wilderness of Solomon in the Dead Sea area of Israel.







sovereign state only three times in its history—twice as a Jewish State and once under the Crusaders. At other times it was part of a larger dominion, with the Jewish people being the only claimants on grounds of previous sovereignty.

Although Palestine has been a battleground for warring Arab nations and a coveted prize of several empires (the country having changed hands 14 times in 13 centuries, usually ruled from without as a remote province), there was never an independent Arab State of Palestine. History tells the story.

In ancient times Palestine comprised an area of approximately 45,000 square miles. In 1917, the government of Great Britain issued what has become known as the Balfour Declaration, in which England welcomed the desires of Jews to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, clearly protecting the rights of the existing inhabitants. In 1920, when there were many political upheavals and intrigues during the control by Great Britain (called the Mandate) which followed the termination of the Ottoman Rule, nearly four-fifths of this territory was handed over by the British to Emir Abdullah of Trans-Jordan, in an effort to dissuade him from advancing against Syria to avenge the expulsion by the French of his brother Faisal of Iraq.

Later, when the so-called "Palestine problem" was turned over to the United Nations, the remaining fifth was the area proposed for division into an Arab State and a Jewish State by the U.N. Special C



tee on Palestine. The Partition Resolution was approved by two-thirds vote of the U.N. General Assembly on November 29, 1947. The Jews accepted this decision, and Israel was declared a State. The Arab nations surrounding Palestine refused to accept this resolution, however, and plunged into battle to annihilate the new Jewish State. This civil war precluded any possibility of the establishment of an independent Arab State in Palestine, for when the armistice agreements were signed, Jordan had annexed the area on the west bank of the Jordan River, and the Gaza Strip was in Egypt's hands. Israel had stood its ground and added 1,500 square miles to the original partition area of 10,000 square miles.

Peace treaties have not yet been signed, and uneasiness and tension mark that part of the world. Until there is peace, there cannot be the full development which is necessary to a region where many problems of land reclamation, health and literacy demand cooperative endeavors backed up by national stability and peaceful borders.

Nevertheless, in spite of economic boycott and maritime blockade by its Arab neighbors, Israel opened its doors for Jewish immigration. The Ingathering of the Exiles, and the dispersed of Judah responded from the four corners of a world far greater than any Isaiah had conceived of centuries ago when he made his prophetic utterances about "The Return."

With security problems nagging at its borders, and tremendous land and water development needed to restore the land to productivity, Israel embarked on a challenging and almost awesome task of "redeeming" the land and the people.

Massive reforestation was begun to stabilize the soil and create precious sub-soil water reserves. Pages could be written about agricultural experimentation, about the almost miraculous settlement of waste stretches in the Negev, of industries springing into being and bringing a sense of the dignity of labor and the self-respect of useful employment to men and women, many of whom had never been close to anything civilized before in their lives, and who had to be trained in the middle years of their lives in skills new and different from anything they had hitherto pursued.

Social problems presented many difficulties, for the cultural gap separated new immigrants, who ranged from great scholars to illiterates, from old to young, from highly cultured backgrounds to primitive ways of life. Each one came, bearing hopes and joys, fears and sorrows, peculiar customs and folkways from their countries of origin. Yet all were united, for at the heart of Israel is a special philosophy—about people.

A member of the Jewish Agency Executive tried to explain it in this way. "One day," he said, "I was down at the dock in Haifa watching the arrival of a boatload of new immigrants. Many of them were primitive,

dirty and illiterate, and as I studied their faces, I thought to myself: Why do I and my fellow Jews dig down in our pockets to bring the people in and to provide them with a home, an education, bread and job? It is not simply that they are Jews. It is because we believe that every human life is an asset or can be made into an asset!"

This philosophy is translated daily into human practice, as ambulances wait at the piers and the airport to assist dependent, physically handicapped individuals who cannot get to the orientation centers themselves. Social workers with seemingly endless patience endeavor to place newcomers in suitable towns or settlements where they may be able to strike roots in the new, yet forever old, homeland.

A hunchback from a European country found himself attending vocational education classes at the age of 64! His entire livelihood before coming to Israel had been derived from the circus where he had been a side-show feature. But the Israelis didn't think it funny to laugh at human deformity, so he had to change his way of life completely. Today he operates a machine in a textile concern in a new desert community, and he holds his head higher than ever before.

Education in Israel is not a luxury, but is considered to be the indispensable instrument in welding together the heterogeneous people which make up the citizenry. On the opening day of school it is exciting to realize that about one-third of the people are involved in studying of one form or another—all the way from tots trotting off to nursery school with plastic bottles of fruit juice clutched in their hands, to boys and girls in elementary, secondary, agricultural, vocational, comprehensive, religious and other specialized institutions, to young men and women attending classes in the army, or in colleges, universities, teachers' seminaries, and adults of all ages in after-work-hours and evening sessions.

With the multiplicity of languages emphasizing the need of a common language of communication, language schools called "ulpanim" have been set up around the country for the teaching of Hebrew and introduction to life in Israel. In one such ulpan the men and women were crowded into classrooms which seemed to be microcosms of the world. For a typical class might have enrolled 56 students from 42 different nations, most speaking different languages. When the director was asked how she ever managed to line up a faculty linguistically able to get along in so many tongues, she replied: "That is impossible. . . . But we do have one prerequisite for all of our teachers. They must be able to speak the language of love. A friendly smile, the squeeze of a hand, a handshake, the sympathetic bonds of wordless understanding—these precede even a Hebrew vocabulary."

Thus, in a tiny area in the vast Middle East, a Jewish state reborn (no bigger in size than New Jersey!) struggles to live according to the precepts of freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by its prophets.

Because of its smallness, its problems as well as its achievements stand out for all to observe. It is a mixture of antiquity and modernism, East and West. It is a unique laboratory in human relations. Religiously, the three great monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam exist there, along with Bahai and Druse and other minorities. People-wise, there are Jewish families who can trace their lineage to ancestors who have always lived in Palestine, and thousands who have come from Oriental, Western and European cultures. Jews make up 90 per cent of the population, and the remainder are principally Arabs, including the Bedouins of the northern part of Israel.

All realize the opportunities peace can bring, and the hope for peace is in the hearts of all those who love life.

Perhaps the great significance which Israel may hold for the world is in the realm of moral thought, for the peoples of the world who are today learning to live together in this little country with all of its difficulties as well as its potentials can live together, then there is hope for the nations of the world to live together in God's created order.

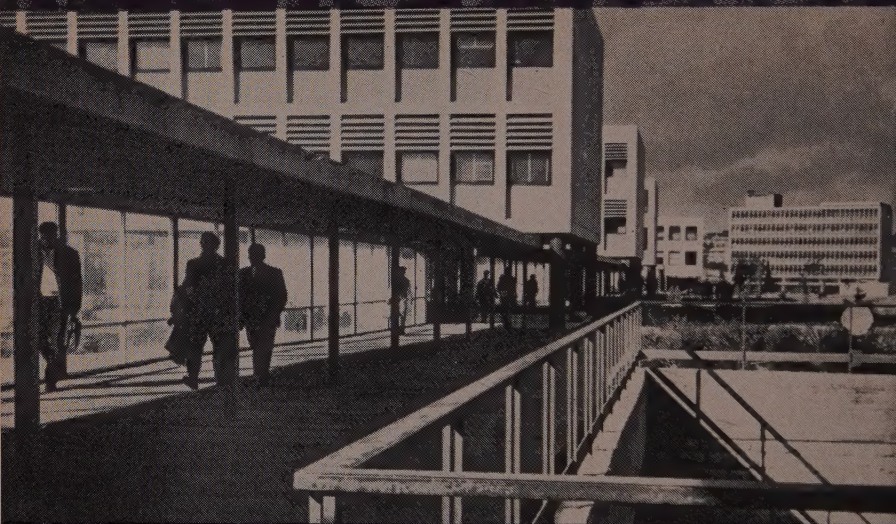
Nancy E. Forsberg is a minister of the United Church of Christ living in Maplewood, N.J. At present she is a full-time graduate student at New York University on a government fellowship. She has lectured extensively throughout the U.S. and Canada about her experiences in Israel where she has worked and lived on three occasions since 1957.



An Israeli guard rests while the group which he's accompanying explores ruins in the Dead Sea area.



On the Hebrew University campus in Western Jerusalem



At the modern port of Haifa in Israel





Israel's determined growth is illustrated by this aerial photo of groves of oranges, the nation's number one export. Hindered during World War II and the Israeli-Arab fighting, citrus production is now being rejuvenated and expanded.

Ashdod, Israel, housing construction is booming.



75-year-old immigrant from Kurdistan is one of the builders of a new Israeli highway.





O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. Be my support when grief silences my voice, and my comfort when woe bends my spirit. Implant humility in my soul, and strengthen my heart with perfect faith in Thee. Help me to be strong in temptation and trial and to be patient and forgiving when others wrong me. Guide me by the light of Thy counsel, that I may ever find strength in Thee, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

אלהי נצור לשוני מרע ושפתי מדבר מרמה:  
ולמקללי נפשי תדום ונפשי בעפר לכל תהיה:  
פתח לבי בתורתך ובמצותיך תרדוף נפשי: וכל  
חושבים עלי רעה מהרה הפך עצתם וקלקל  
מחשבתם. למען יחלצון ידידיך הושיעה ימינך  
וענני: יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך יי  
צורי ונאלי: